

THE PRICKED EAR

Vol. II, No. 5

The Gryphon Society

4 March 1958

Editors: B. Fowler, N. LaPara, S. Morse, H. Troy-Office: Dravo B-112

THE NEW YORK TIMES may have the largest staff of foreign correspondents of any newspaper in the world, but the Pricked Ear bows to no man when quality of foreign reporting (i.e., reporting by non-staff personnel from outside the freshman quad) is mentioned. Our own roving reporter, Dean J. D. Leith, has filed the following story from Mount Palomar, where he recently spent some time examining freshmen on various campuses through the 200-inch telescope. We have no report on his observations of non-Lehigh frosh, but he seemed visibly shaken upon his return to our campus. Effigywise, we know just how he feels. But here is his story:

In September 1957 the South Mountain Farmers Almanac published a tabular Distribution of 28 Sections in the Freshman Residence Halls According to (1) House and (2) Predicted (!) Scholarship Rank For the Fall '57 Semester. You were advised to "watch for follow-up report in Feb. '58 which will present a rank correlation coefficient based on the forecast ranks and the achieved ranks. If this coefficient is below 0.50, you are advised to cancel your subscription to the . . . Almanac."

It was a close squeak, fellers, but the Old South Mountain Farmer made it: the subscription list is safe for another year with a rank correlation of 0.52. This is computed according to the standard formula, and can be verified by any competent psychologist, e.g., Mr. Fozard. Mr. Fozard may comment that 0.52 is not an astonishingly high correlation, but he will also agree that it is moderately high, as these things go. That the "forecast" hit six Sections right on the nose (Dravo D1, D2, D3, and C3; Drinker B2, and Richards B3) is by no means accidental: To have picked the right Section for the No. 1 rank on a purely chance basis would have involved a probability of $1/28$; then to have picked the right occupant of the No. 4 rank would have involved a probability of $1/27$; and so on for the six hits; the product probability for these six hits appearing on a pure chance basis would have been one in 271, 252, 800.

The Almanac went on to say that there would be a tabulation listing Counselors whose Sections rank higher than predicted and those whose Sections rank lower than predicted. To save space, this list will be limited to that one-third for which rank differences (between predicted and actual) were as much as nine or more places, as shown in parentheses:

Actual Rank Higher
Than Predicted
Dravo D4 (13)
Drinker 1 (12)
Dravo A2 (12)
Dravo B3 (9)

Actual Rank Lower
Than Predicted
Dravo A1 (10)
Dravo B4 (10)
Drinker B3 (11)
Drinker A3 (15)
Richards A3 (17)

Because the correlation measure 0.52 shows a reasonable measure of validity in the empirical index on which the forecasting was based, the comparison just made suggests that Dravo D4, on the one hand, and Drinker A3 and Richards A3, on the other, be examined by Mr. Fozard for cause-and-effect relationships. A four man conference (Mr. F. and the counseling staff members involved) would perhaps yield some valuable agreement as to general operating principles.

As a "bonus", the ranks of the several sections were compared with the ranks of their respective counselors. The rank correlation coefficient is only 0.24 when the combined averages of Counselor and Assistant Counselor were used in Richards and Drinker (except for Sec. I in each case). The meaning is that leadership and other factors, as well as scholarship, are important qualities in counselors. The correlation goes down when only the high average in each pair is used, and

up when the low average in each pair is used. From this it follows that it is more important (in counselor selection processes) that low scholarship be avoided than that high (higher and higher!) scholarship performance be sought.

The Gryphon Society, in achieving a 2.624 average and top place in the Fall '57 Semester living group rank list, has made good on another forecast, of course. (It's fortunate that Derse's 4.00 didn't count in the Dravo D-1 average, or history would have read differently.)

J. D. Leith

MEETINGS: Dravo Counselors; tonight, 4 March 1958, 11:00 P.M.; Dravo Counselors' Lounge. Short but important attendance mandatory.

NEXT PRICKED EAR will be out soon. (Hah! You didn't think we were going to commit ourselves to a specific date, did you?) Our big story will be an illustrated expose. What would you like to see exposed? The frosh? The Brown and White? You name it, we blast it!!



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

